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STATEMENT

OF

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CHAIRMAN
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BEFORE THE
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

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Good Morning Chairmen Doyle and Taborsak, Members of the Committee, my name is Ron Pyle. I serve as the volunteer Chairman of the National Automotive Service Task Force (NASTF). I am also the President of the Automotive Service Association. I am testifying today in my role as Chairman of the National Automotive Service Task Force.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today about NASTF and our involvement in vehicle service information availability. I would like to point out that NASTF neither supports nor opposes this legislation. We believe that NASTF is an effective and appropriate process to resolve any gaps in automotive service information.

The National Automotive Service Task Force is a not-for-profit, task force established to facilitate the identification and correction of gaps in the availability and accessibility of automotive service information, training, diagnostic tools and equipment, and communications to automotive service professionals. NASTF is a voluntary, cooperative effort among the automotive service industry, the equipment and tool industry, and automotive manufacturers.

After the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, independent automotive repairers became concerned about the access to service information for post 1996 vehicles. The rapidly changing technologies compounded the information challenges faced by automotive service professionals. The NASTF was established in the fall of 2000 as a national successor to a pilot program in Arizona during 1999 and 2000. In the Arizona pilot, participating groups learned that they shared the common objective of ensuring swift and proper repair of customer vehicles, and that the best way to improve current information gaps was to work constructively to improve delivery systems. The internet and other technology advancements offer great opportunities today to address these problems.

NASTF developed an Original Equipment Service Information Matrix to illustrate what information is available directly from each car manufacturer including contact information, phone numbers, websites, etc. This document is continually updated. To help identify gaps in the availability of information, NASTF encourages service technicians to identify problems locating or obtaining service information through the sources listed in the matrix. These issues are reported directly to NASTF by submitting a NASTF Service Information Request Form. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent in promoting the Service Information Request Form process in the trade press, training sessions and other media outlets.

NASTF also provides this service to automotive tool and equipment companies seeking specific tool information via the Tools Data Information Request Form. In addition, Training and Collision matrices have also been established by the task force.

NASTF established the Secure Data Release Model in 2008 to give automakers a flexible system to provide 24/7 access to vehicle security information for pre-approved locksmiths and technicians. Our website, www.nastf.org, has an excellent illustration of how this process works. Independent repairers, insurers, law enforcement and automakers worked together to develop this secure data system. The goal is to ensure that vehicle owners and their property are safe and that technicians have access to the information they need to repair their customer's vehicle.

Independent repair facilities see about 75% of the 500 million repair service orders, in the U.S. per year. In the past three years, NASTF received less than 100 Service Information Requests (SIRs) per year. I asked my staff to check the records for the past several years of SIRs

that originated in the state of Connecticut. No SIRs were received from Connecticut independent repair shops for 2009, 2010 or so far in 2011.

We believe NASTF has performed a great service not only for independent repairers and the automotive industry but also for consumers. Our meetings are public and we charge no membership fees. Volunteers have worked hard to make this organization a success. We now have a paid staff and a board of directors. I encourage you to take a few minutes to go to our website, www.nastf.org, and see what we've been up to in the last decade. No system is perfect but we have established an open, cost-free procedure that we believe responds to service information and other gaps in the automotive repair process, in a timely manner.

NASTF assures technicians have a place to go to resolve gaps in service information. It is a voluntary, open process. A process that continues to evolve as new technologies enter the marketplace. No state or federal government agency can provide what NASTF offers the independent automotive repairer, a cooperative industry working group focused on assuring that these gaps are resolved. We would be honored to set up a demonstration of the NASTF process at a future date. NASTF has clearly demonstrated that by working together we can resolve any issues relative to automotive service information.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today for the National Automotive Service Task Force. I will be happy to answer any questions that you have or provide follow-up information.